# Fellowship in Prayer

"For a world united in prayer"

*Look to this day!*
*For it is life, the very life of life.*
*In its brief course lie all the varieties and realities of your existence:*
*The bliss of growth; the glory of action; the splendor of beauty.*
*For yesterday is already a dream, and tomorrow is only a vision,*
*But today well lived, makes of every yesterday*
*A dream of happiness, and every tomorrow a vision of hope.*

Volume X February, 1959 Number 1

## OUR PURPOSE

To promote the practice of prayer among *all* religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God, regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind.

FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

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Volume X February, 1959 Number 1

# NOBILITY OF CHARACTER

*Man's Highest Estate*

Nobility of character is man's highest estate.

It is the composite of the sublime qualities which are the fruits of Divine Love, which are inherent in all men as the gift of God, and which are developed through aspiration, meditation, supplication, renunciation—with perseverance, faith, and the will to achieve.

Nobility of character is manifested through good conduct and good conduct is the fulfillment of the Law.

It creates a radiant and magnetic personality, shedding his light out into the world, a veritable beacon, uplifting and helping all who come within the radius of his influence.

It is the crowning glory of a life consecrated to the service of God; the fruition of a life lost in the service of others.

Nobility of character is spiritual supremacy.

Altruism, one of the qualities which enter into the building of nobility of character, is the motivating force that lifts man up out of the barren lands of selfishness into the fruitful fields of selflessness, and leads him on to freedom and fulfillment.

He whose life is fortified by nobility of character is a pillar of strength in the home, in the community, in the nation and in the world.

— *Harry Halsey Starrett.*

## THE RELIGIOUS CHARACTER

In the centerfold, this month of February, we pay tribute to the two men who may be said to be the greatest Americans. Their position in our history is unassailable. What they were more than what they did—their character more than their actions—is what has fascinated historians and all of us alike.

Lincoln has come down to us as a man of great mystery. The haunting, mystic elements in his nature have for a century eluded the grasp of the most searching and indefatigable of his biographers. More than any other American he seems to have been thrust into history and greatness by the universal power that rules our destinies. So inevitable does his emergence seem to have been that he now looms almost larger than the war itself, bloody and bitter ordeal though it was, as his spirit brooded, like a god in Homer, over the whole tremendous drama.

To posterity the character of Washington is more mysterious still. He did not possess Lincoln's gift of eloquence, his extraordinary ability to voice in unforgettable sentences the aspirations of a whole people. Nor are his letters and speeches remarkable. Even his military generalship, though inspiring, was not outstanding. In many obvious respects he was overshadowed by his brilliant contemporaries—Jefferson, Hamilton, and the others. In the whole record of his long career there is little to account for Washington's pre-eminence among the great men of his time, or to explain why he was always the first wherever he went, why with one consent other men yielded to him, gravitated around him like a sun. Some mysterious influence in the man—wholly lost to history—must have inspired awe in others and brought out the highest that was in them; some powerful radiation of virtue and integrity that dimmed the glittering but replaceable talents of the men who surrounded him.

It is character, then, that lies at the deepest roots of a man's nature, that ultimately determines all his actions, and may be regarded as *what a man is*. In a very real sense a man's character is his destiny.

Of all types of character the religious is the highest. In our last issue we read of a young man, troubled by some

personal problem, who visited Phillips Brooks for counsel and left without describing what the problem was. In Brooks himself, he explained, he had found the answer he sought: "the contagion of a triumphant spirit." Triumphant is the key-word, and is what marks the religious character off from all others. Triumphant over what? Over our fears, our desires, our nagging doubts; over all the temptations, anxieties and old habits that beset us. Sometimes we wonder if we will ever free ourselves from these dark growths of our lower selves. And then, like the young man similarly troubled, we meet a true religious man, a living proof that all our doubts and fears can be conquered and destroyed forever.

Such men, in whom the religious character has flowered in all its glory and power, are themselves proof of the reality of spirit and of God's existence. A religious man or woman, more than all the wonders and mysteries of nature, is what most convinces us of the reality of God. It is not possible to remain in their presence for long and still doubt that God is real or that the soul has within it the power to triumph over all the weaknesses of mind and body. All of us have known one or two such people. Even the thought of them teaches us how to react to the challenges of the world.

How may we possess for ourselves, for the illumination of our own lives, the secrets they have discovered?

"Holy" is the crucial word. To be good is not enough, to be ethical is not enough. We are told that man cannot be good unless he strives to be holy. Our reach must exceed our grasp, our ideal must always stand higher than our achievement—until, one day, in this life or some other, we find ourselves transformed and attain what we reach for, and become what all our aspirations have led us to. We don't know when this will happen, but happen it must. In moments of supreme honesty with ourselves we sense that it must happen, that anything less will leave us unfulfilled and unfinished—that somehow it is our destiny. And perhaps upon our unlimited spiritual unfoldment, and final freedom, depends the very meaning of the universe. For this alone the prophets came to rouse us from our sleep, and lead us up and onward until every one of us has realized who he is, and what Truth is.

# A GARDEN MEDITATION

*By Roy Wallace Thomas*

Just now the trees and shrubs are stark and bare, except the evergreens. But soon the sun will summon them to the resurrection we call spring.

Last summer, a young mother of the neighborhood came to see our flowers. The irises, delicate as orchids, were gone; the gladioli were not yet in bud; but the roses were in full bloom, and my wife's white daisies made two snowbanks at the end of the velvet green lawn. Beyond, and in other parts of the garden, delphiniums — the Galahads gleaming white and the others resplendent in color from sky-blue to orchid and purple — stood tall and stately like floral spires.

The young woman turned toward a bush of large pink roses and held two of them in her hand. Speaking softly as if to herself, she said with deep conviction, "I do not see how anyone, in the presence of beauty like this, can fail to believe in God." I thought to myself, "Surely such disbelief is a form of blindness."

Later, as I meditated, the following lines by Elizabeth Barrett Browning came to mind:

*"Earth's crammed with heaven,*
*And every common bush afire with God;*
*But only he who sees takes off his shoes—*
*The rest sit around it and pluck blackberries."*

Even a child or a bear can sit by the bush and eat blackberries, but the poet, the man with his eyes open, can see God in the miracle of a growing bush.

In this age of the dominance of science, with its comfortable yet terrible secularity, it is never wise to repeat Darwin's mistake. During the long years of his absorption in the world of nature, and despite the greatness of his achievements, he unwittingly penalized himself. He found, when too late, that by neglecting the wealth of poetry and music he had made himself emotionally poor.

In words now famous he wrote in his "Life and Letters": "My mind seems to have become a kind of machine for grinding out general laws... If I had to live my life over again I would make it a rule to read some poetry and listen to some music at least every week. The loss of these tastes is a loss of happiness."

It is significant that the themes of much of the world's great poetry and music are religious, and the same is true

of art. We think of Isaiah, Dante and Milton; of Bach, Handel, Haydn and Mendelssohn; of Raphael, Michelangelo and da Vinci. Music and poetry would have enabled Darwin to walk in his garden with the eye of the man of religion, adding rich insights of purpose and meaning to the knowledge of material laws.

As I meditated further I thought, "The flowers have a language, a music of their own, very marvelous, for paradoxically it is *seen* and not *heard.*" I remembered my astonishment some years ago when an instructor in electronics took me into his shop, turned some buttons, produced some strange sounds, and when gorgeous bands of color appeared on the screen, he said, "That is sound transmuted into color. *You are seeing sound.*" Is it too fanciful to say that the flowers have a music we cannot hear because it is transmuted into form and color? To the artist and poet the flowers do speak. What do they say?

In the first place, they tell of truth so profound that Tennyson could sing:

*"Flower in the crannied wall,*
*I pluck you out of the crannies,*
*I hold you here, root and all in my hand,*
*Little flower–but IF I could understand*
*What you are, root and all, and all in all,*
*I should know what God and man is."*

In the second place, the flowers in their own way sing a song of adoration in accord with the 19th Psalm:

*"The heavens are telling the glory of God;*
*and the firmament proclaims his handiwork."*

It was this Psalm that inspired Addison to create the most majestic of all the hymns of adoration, which he set appropriately to a melody selected from Haydn's great oratorio, "Creation"—

*"The spacious firmament on high,*
*With all the blue ethereal sky,*
*And spangled heavens, a shining frame,*
*Their great Original proclaim."*

In this connection, it is good to recall two lines from the 94th Psalm:

*"He who planted the ear, does he not hear?*
*He who formed the eye, does he not see?"*

Do not these simple words flash a deep insight more effectively than many a labored argument in defense of the reality of God? This is the Psalmist's logic: When you see a great painting, you know there is an artist. When you read a poem, you know

there is a poet. And when you see the perfection of the flowers, the grandeur of sea and sky and mountain, or contemplate the miracle of the human body with the beauty of its vastly complex yet unified functioning, you *know* there is a Creator, infinite in his artistry and power.

An old legend tells of God walking in the Garden of Eden in the cool of the day. Miss Browning was certain that God walked in her garden. The young mother was right about not being able to explain flowers apart from God. And I am sure that the flowers in my garden, and in yours, and all the flowers of earth, in their own way, sing in unison with Addison's "spangled heavens," "unwearied sun" and moon and planets:

*"The hand that made us is divine."*

## DIVINE DIALOGUE

He said: *Who is at the Door?*

Said I: *Thy humble servant.*

He Said: *What business have you?*

Said I: *Lord! to love Thee!*

He said: *How long will you stand at the Gate?*

Said I: *Till Thou dost call me.*

He said: *What proof do you offer of your love?*

Said I:
*For love of Thee*
*I renounced my all—*
*Sovereignty and power,*
*Wealth of the world,*
*Honors of the earth,*
*Beauty and every blessing of my life!*

He said: *What witness have you?*

Said I: *Tears in my eyes.*

He said: *What do you want of Me?*

Said I: *Thy compassion and love.*

He said: *Who called you here?*

Said I: *The fragrance of Thy Name.*

— MIRA, 17th century Hindu saint famous for her lyrics of devotion.

## THE SEEN AND THE UNSEEN

*By W. J. Thompson, D.D.*

A small boy hurried home after witnessing a science demonstration, and announced a tremendous discovery. "I have just found out what tears are made of. They are only salt and water, so I need not worry any more about mother's tears!".

But he was wrong. Science examines a tear and describes it in terms of physical structure--so much water, mucus, and salt. Is that an adequate definition? "No," replies Religion. "There are feelings and emotions, inward meanings that use the physical structure of tears." Religion evaluates these imponderables. It takes both science and religion to give an adequate definition of tears. The things which can be seen and weighed and measured—these are used in the service of science. Yet faith, hope, love, sorrow and joy are just as real as water, mucus and salt, although science is unable to see these realities under a microscope or in a test tube.

We have never looked at a piece of "faith" on a plate, nor have we ever obtained a slice of "hope" or "love"; while joy and sorrow completely elude the instruments of science. The truth is, the seen and the unseen are so thoroughly blended in the life of each individual that we need both science and religion in order to understand what each day brings to us. We can verify that which can be seen, weighed, and measured. Can we verify the unseen realities?

The answer is Yes. We can test life's intellectual and spiritual values by experiment. If the values are real, life's experience will approve them. If they are not real, they will wither and die.

Because man has a heart, possesses a mind and is a soul, he longs for more than that which can be seen and handled, and hungers for those realities which lie beyond his vision.

For many, nature, with its myriad manifestations of beauty, has proved to be the pathway leading from the seen to the unseen, into the Presence of God. Whittier's lines express this experience:

*"Touched by a light that hath no name,*
*A glory never sung,*
*Aloft on sky and mountain wall*
*Are God's great pictures hung.*
*The valley holds its breath, no leaf*

*Of all its elm is twirled:*
*The silence of Eternity*
*Seems falling on the world."*

Sometimes a strain of music, a verse of a hymn or a poem, a paragraph in a letter, a lovely picture, a quotation from Scripture, a gorgeous sunset—any one of these may suddenly be transformed into a highway taking us to Him for whom we long.

*"I had a visit from the Living God!*
*At evening time the sky was all aglow,*
*The burnished hills threw back an amber light -*
*Yet it was not the light that moved me so.*
*Just then I felt a Presence by my side,*
*There came to me a Voice - so sweet and low;*
*It was a radiant and thrilling sight -*
*Yet it was not the light that moved me so..."*

In the personal letters of so careful a thinker as James Russell Lowell there is a reference to a remarkable incident. He writes: "Mr. Putnam entered into an argument with me on spiritual matters. As I was speaking something wonderful happened. I clearly felt the Spirit of God in me, and around me. The whole room appeared to me to be full of God and His glory. The air seemed to waver with the presence of something indescribable..."

Through the centuries there are definite accounts of supernatural revelations to men and women. Let us so live that we will be sensitive to the spiritual influences surrounding us and respond to the divine companionship of the Living and Eternal God. This is no illusion, but an experience common to many. As Tennyson puts it: "Few there be...who have not felt and known a Higher than they see." In many lives there are luminous moments, bright instants of indescribable glory, a door silently opens, and they catch a glimpse of Heaven's splendor. It disappears almost before they realize what is happening. But so long as they live they never forget that fleeting unspeakable sight when they were granted the priceless privilege of "seeing the invisible."

Atheists and scoffers have had a merry time making fun of these scriptural passages: "Seeing Him who is invisible," and "We look...at things which are not seen." They point with scorn to such statements, saying: "Here are self-evident contradictions in the Scriptures, for everyone with ordinary intelligence knows it is impossible to 'see the invis-

ible' or to 'look at things not seen.'" But these same critics are strangely silent when we prove to them that modern science confirms the Scripture statements.

Invisible light is used on railroads to discover an incipient "hot box" before a train must grind to a costly stop. This same infra-red radiation checks on the internal wear in important machinery parts before they break down. Modern business corporations call in science to use invisible light to detect potential explosive conditions in oil tanks in time to save many lives. The medical profession is experimenting with infra-red to determine temperature distribution over the human body. And scientists are using cameras in the study of invisible plant life. Thus, atheists and scoffers are out of date when they ridicule the Scripture statements about "seeing the invisible."

In the spiritual realm a great many can testify that it is gloriously possible to see the invisible. They are grateful to the modern scientists who have proved beyond all doubt that the invisible can be seen. But long before the appearance of such proof, spiritual-minded men and women already had convincing evidence of divine revelation in their own lives..,of the One—

*"Who is the image of the invisible God...*
*For by Him were all things created,*
*that are in heaven,*
*And that are in earth, visible and invisible."*

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*"...Thee man would praise: man, but a particle of Thy creation; man, that bears about him his mortality, the witness of his sin, the witness that Thou, O God, resisteth the proud; yet would man praise Thee; he, but a particle of Thy creation....For Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee."*

— St. Augustine.

I fled Him down the nights and down the days;
I fled Him down the arches of the years;
I fled Him down the labyrinthine ways
Of my own mind; and in the mist of tears
I hid from Him....

— *From THE HOUND OF HEAVEN by Francis Thompson.*

# PERSONALITY, CHARACTER AND THE CHRIST

*By Rev. G. Roy Bragg*

A word that has been overworked in our generation is the word personality. Judging from the amount of literature written on the subject, it would appear that a scintillating personality is one of the fundamental issues of life. The development of personality, rightly understood, is very important and should be the concern of us all. But we should remember that personality is something other than a superficial cultural veneer or a pseudo-joviality which may be turned on and off. Personality is the total expression of one's being. It indicates the set of the soul, the nature of character. Personality in a very real sense is the voice of character, and a concern for personality development would wisely begin with a concern for character.

It is a common observation that whenever we wish to develop any art we naturally go to the one who has been most successful in its development. The same principle applies to personality. If we would develop the highest potential of our person, we must learn from Jesus Christ, who was for most of us the greatest person who ever lived. No man or movement has so influenced people or so changed the course of history.

I never cease to marvel at the power of His person. It became evident when He stood up to preach among His own people. A tremendous test: He must have felt the fear of the familiar. But the Bible tells us that 'the common people heard Him gladly'; that His enemies declared 'the whole world has gone after Him'; that all agreed 'never a man spoke as this man'; and that many concluded 'truly this is the Son of God'.

Not only did Jesus exert a power for good in His own day, but His influence has continued to grow with the passing of time. Every century has declared Him the world's greatest contemporary, and some of the most convincing testimonies have come from unexpected sources. Renan, a French philosopher of another day, has been described many times as an unbeliever. Yet in his book, "The Life of Jesus," he writes: "He is the incomparable man to whom the universal conscience has decreed the title 'Son of God', and that with justice. In the first rank of this great family of true sons of God we must place Jesus. Whatever may

be the surprise of the future, Jesus will never be surpassed." Some years ago the late Rabbi Wise spoke on the theme, "The Greatness of Jesus." During his address he attributed to Jesus such superlative qualities of character that any Christian would be proud to have thought of them first. The Encyclopedia Britannica is concerned with factual knowledge alone. This authoritative volume, when speaking about Jesus, says something like this: "If God were to appear upon the earth today, Christians would expect Him to look like Jesus." What more can one say about the power of His person? Jesus so lived His life that 1900 years after, when men talk about God, they describe Him in the likeness of Jesus.

But the greatest reason for wonder and amazement is not the unique power of Jesus himself. By His very nature we come to expect that. What really surprises us is the assertion of Jesus that we too may have that power. "Ye shall receive power..." "Greater things than these shall ye do..." "Follow me..." Almost every utterance of Jesus indicates that He was far in advance of His age, or even ours. His method was not to belittle but to challenge even the least of men. How well He knew human nature. Only a few days ago a Harvard professor said, "We do not develop character until we are challenged." Jesus was practicing this principle 1900 years ago, and history has proven its workability. It is no accident that the truly great personalities have been those noble souls who have given themselves in reaching for the highest known ideals, demonstrated perfectly in Jesus Christ. If we are genuinely concerned about realizing the full power of our person, logic and wisdom dictate that we must learn from Him.

First of all, we have to learn something about His scale of values. What did Jesus consider fundamentally important? Our world has a great many answers to this question. Some of them are half truths, some of them false and misleading. But we are often attracted by such standards, resulting in a misdirection of our energy and a failure in the full expression of our being.

What makes for power and influence in the twentieth century? Money and possessions would come high on a popular list. Well-meaning people often reason that the only requirement for doing good is a good pocketbook.

There is no virtue in poverty. Money wisely spent can be a real ministry to mankind. But money should not be regarded as the fundamental basis of life. The greatness of Jesus can never be measured by such a scale. He lived in a time of great austerity. Only forty per cent of His country's land was tillable, and forty per cent of the national income had to be paid to a foreign power. His private life was probably more austere. "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head."

We value education in our day. Science is emphasized more and more as the imperative to power. Our young people are urged to greater effort in learning, and they should. But once again the greatness of Jesus cannot be explained on this basis. He probably had the schooling of an ordinary Jewish boy plus an excellent knowledge of the scriptures. But, as far as we know, He never sat at the feet of a Gamaliel.

Political power and prestige seem all-important to the twentieth century. Sometimes we reason that if we were the President or someone of prominence we could really make ourselves felt. But Jesus was great without any such prestige. He held no political office. He was not a member of the Sanhedrin. He was described merely as "Joseph's son." And indications are that He came from the wrong side of the tracks: "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?"

For Jesus, life was fundamentally a moral and spiritual affair. A man was important not because of what he had, but because of what he was and what, by the Grace of God, he might become. In Jesus' scale of values money, education, power, prestige and all such acquirements had importance only as they were used for moral and spiritual ends. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God..." Put first things first, and the parts of life will fall into place, and even personality will find its potential.

Adhering to this scale of values, Jesus' great longing was always to live close to God. He was 'in tune with the infinite'. He recognized that behind life and all things there is an all-wise and all-benevolent God. The universe has plan and purpose and man is a part of it. Furthermore man is happiest, and only truly finds himself, when he discovers God's plan and brings his life in alignment with it. This is what Jesus was doing

continually. Dr. George A. Buttrick, in his book on "Prayer," points out that only 18 of the 111 verses of the Sermon on the Mount are without rabbinical precedent. Yet we associate the whole sermon with Jesus, for the simple reason that Jesus not only spoke the Sermon on the Mount, He *was* the Sermon on the Mount. He lived so near to God that He was able to say, without ever arousing criticism: "I am the way, the truth and the life."

Jesus had power because He was a man of great faith. Most of us profess faith. But too often we trust God only when God's plans coincide with ours. When something unexpected happens contrary to the way we want it, we are likely to express doubt and say, "Where is God now?" Probably no one had a better right to doubt God and man than Jesus. He ministered to the needs of the multitude and they crucified Him. He followed God's plan completely, but His prayer that "The Cup" might pass was not answered in the affirmative. Yet He did not turn back. He prayed for the forgiveness of His enemies and trusted in God implicitly to the end. "Not my will but Thine be done" was His prayer.

Finally, Jesus was a person of power because He shared His life. He gave the last full measure. The most miserable people in the world are those who live only for self. The man who seeks only to save life loses it, and he who gives life away finds it. This principle is imprinted in the very pattern of life. Our greatest blessings are preserved and multiplied only when we give them away and share them with others. A brilliant idea is wasted and lost if it is kept. If it is shared it is preserved and multiplied. The same is true of love and all other precious values of life. Albert Schweitzer gained new life for himself and made new life for thousands of others when he gave himself to Africa. We give and we grow. We spare and we spoil. Jesus provided new life for mankind when He sacrificed Himself on Calvary.

We reiterate: No man or movement has so influenced the life of man or changed the course of history as Jesus of Nazareth. We may never comprehend fully this tremendous truth, but His self revelation and transforming power are so convincing that we know the basic principle of life: "Seek ye first the way of Christ, then character and personality will be added unto you."

# Char

WASHINGTON—

"....We cannot find the smallest part of the personal weight of Washington in the narrative of his exploits.... Something resided in these men which begot an expectation that outran all their performance. The largest part of their power was latent. This is that which we call Character--a reserved force, which acts directly by presence and without means. It is conceived of as a certain undemonstrable Genius, by whose impulses the man is guided but whose counsels he cannot impart....What others effect by talent or eloquence, this man accomplishes by some magnetism.... He conquers because his arrival alters the face of affairs."

—Emerson (On the Character of Great Men)

* * *

*"America has furnished to the world the character of Washington. And if our American institutions had done nothing else, that alone would have entitled them to the respect of mankind."*

—Webster

* * *

"His genius was of a peculiar kind; the genius of character, of thought, and the objects of thought solidified and concentrated into active faculty. He belongs to that rare class of men...who have impressed their characters upon nations without pampering national vices."

*—Whipple*

* * *

"There is virtue in the look of a great man. I felt myself warmed and refreshed by it during the rest of my life."

*—Chateaubriand (After meeting Washington)*

# acter

LINCOLN—

"...You have told us about Alexander and Napoleon. But you have not told us about a man so great that he even forgave the crimes of his greatest enemies and shook brotherly hands with those who had plotted against his life. His name was Lincoln and the country in which he lived is called America. Tell us of that man."

*—(Spoken to Tolstoy by a Russian mountain chieftain)*

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*"....He will become one of the world's legendary figures because of his peculiar moral powers and greatness of character...He was what Beethoven was in music, Dante in poetry, Raphael in painting, and Christ in philosophy of life. He was a saint of humanity whose name will live thousands of years in the legends of future generations. We are still too near his greatness and so can hardly appreciate his supreme power; but in a few centuries time our descendants will find him far greater than we do.*

—Tolstoy (Writing in the same year Lincoln died)

* * *

"....He offered no shining qualities at the first encounter; he did not offend by superiority...He had a vast good nature, which made him tolerant and accessible to all. And how this good nature became a noble humanity in many a tragic case which the events of the war brought to him, everyone will remember; and with what increasing tenderness he dealt when a whole race was thrown on his compassion.... Then, what an occasion was the whirlwind of the war. There, by his courage, his justice, his even temper, his fertile counsel, his humanity, he stood a heroic figure in the centre of a heroic epoch. He is the true history of the American people in his time..."

*—Emerson (At the Concord Funeral Service for Lincoln)*

## WHERE, WHO, WHAT IS GOD?

*By H. P. Blavatsky*

*(The following is an excerpt from the writings of one of the founders of the Theosophical movement. We believe it may be of interest to our readers.)*

When, years ago, we first travelled over the East... two... questions oppressed our thoughts: *Where, Who, What is God? Who ever saw the Immortal Spirit of man, so as to be able to assure himself of man's immortality?*

It was while most anxious to solve these perplexing problems that we came into contact with certain men, endowed with such mysterious powers and such profound knowledge that we may truly designate them as the sages of the Orient... They showed us that by combining science with religion, the existence of God and immortality of man's spirit may be demonstrated like a problem of Euclid. For the first time we received the assurance that the Oriental philosophy has room for no other faith than an absolute and immovable faith in the omnipotence of man's own immortal self. We were taught that this omnipotence comes from the kinship of man's spirit with the Universal Soul—God! The latter, they said, can never be demonstrated but by the former. Man-spirit proves God-spirit, as the one drop of water proves a source from which it must have come. Tell one who had never seen water, that there is an ocean of water, and he must accept it on faith or reject it altogether. But let one drop fall upon his hand, and he then has the fact from which all the rest may be inferred. After that he could by degrees understand that a boundless and fathomless ocean of water existed. Blind faith would no longer be necessary; he would have supplanted it with *knowledge*.

When one sees mortal man displaying tremendous capabilities, controlling the forces of nature and opening up to view the world of spirit, the reflective mind is overwhelmed with the conviction that if one man's spiritual *Ego* can do this much, the capabilities of the Father Spirit must be relatively as much vaster as the whole ocean surpasses the single drop in volume and potency. *Ex nihilo nihil fit* (Nothing comes out of nothing—Ed.); prove the soul of man by its wondrous powers—you have proved God!

## IN THE REALM OF REVELATION

*By Bess Foster Smith*

"Progress has been made," says G. N. M. Tyrrell, President of the British Society of Psychical Research, "not by following the laws of logic, but by inspirational ideas that have flashed into the mind from some higher source." Such ideas are generally known as *revelations*. Emerson says they are always attended by an "emotional delight of a sublime nature as if blasted by an excess of light." As examples, he cites the conversion of Paul, the trances of Socrates, the convulsions of George Fox and the illuminations of Emmanuel Swedenborg (1668-1772). Swedenborg, he said, tried to show the connection between nature and the affections of the soul. He pierced the spiritual or emblematic character of the visible, tangible world as no one else has ever done.

Swedenborg himself calls revelation the "unsought endowment of God." One must have a pure ego to receive it and be without selfish motive. If he can thus qualify there will be no obstruction, and the wisdom will flow in easily and gladly.

Swedenborg first prepared himself by studying all the branches of the physical sciences and mathematics. From these studies he learned the underlying principles of the universe that enabled him to receive the "key to Aladdin's treasure house." His eagerness for knowledge would not let him stop until every door leading to unexplored interiors in nature had been opened.

After mastering all the known branches of the material sciences, he gave himself over entirely to the spiritual world. He accepted the physical body as the soul's domain while on earth. However, he maintained that the body would be entirely dead but for the spiritual life contained in each cell. In order to make it more understandable, he compares it to the light and heat from the sun. The rays of light he compares to Knowledge, and the heat rays to Love. The will is contained in the Divine Love, and the understanding in the Divine Wisdom.

With such mathematical precision Swedenborg leads one who will follow his theme into a maze of unexplored regions of the mind and gives one an exalted evaluation of life as a spiritual reality and an assurance that you, yourself, are an immortal soul.

## THAT STRANGE WORD: HOLY

*By Harold K. Schilling*

Let us think together about a word that is very strange, yet has an important bearing upon the meaning of worship, and therefore of religion, and indeed of life itself. It is the word "holy." The idea it stands for...has been regarded as absolutely fundamental in all high religions, including of course those of the western world..,

Now, I confess that until relatively recently it had not occurred to me, certainly not forcibly, that there might be an important difference between being holy and being good, between the holy and the ethical. That this might be so dawned on me not long ago when I was reading a remarkable book entitled MAN'S QUEST FOR GOD, by a Jewish scholar, Dr. Abraham Joshua Heschel. As I was reading along there suddenly struck me between the eyes, so to speak, the following startling assertions: "To the philosophers the idea of the good was the most exalted idea, the *ultimate* idea. To Judaism the idea of the good is *penultimate*. It cannot exist without the holy. The good is the base, the holy is the summit. Man cannot be good unless he strives to be holy." This pronouncement occurs in about the middle of the book, and the last half of it may be regarded as an elaboration of the theme that God's demand upon man is that he be *more than good*, namely holy. As I followed the argument the feeling grew upon me that here was something tremendously significant that I must know more about. So I entered upon a modest campaign of study on the subject of the holy; and I would like to tell you about it. Please believe that I myself realize that I don't know much in this field. I am a physicist, not a theologian...

Apparently the concept of the holy is regarded by many distinguished scholars as *that idea above all others* which uniquely distinguishes religion from other areas of thought and life. It has at least two meanings. First, it denotes an aspect or dimension of reality. Thus the Bible, as well as other sacred scriptures, speaks of holy things, holy places, holy time, the holy heavens, and so on. Second, it refers to an aspect or dimension of living, of conduct and behavior. In both cases high religion claims that this dimension is one not

encountered elsewhere, that it involves knowledge and insights above and beyond those attainable in other ways...

Things are said to be *holy*, apparently, if through them men come in contact with... the infinite and eternal beyond, the transcendent, the ground of being, the source of ultimate mystery, that reality which no language can describe adequately and therefore is referred to as the ineffable or unutterable. This reality, high religion asserts, is objectively real in the sense that it impresses itself upon men's consciousness...as something given and existing itself, independent of their wishes or desires. There is a *must* about it.

When we see a rainbow we feel we must accept it as being there whether we are or not. It thrusts itself upon us. It is objective. In this sense the realm of the holy is also objective, a part of our environment, pressing upon us from beyond us—so high religion would say. It fascinates and draws men on. At the same time it somehow repels, and men shrink from it in... reverent fear. This realm of reality has sometimes been called the *mysterium tremendum*. It is that reality to which men down through the ages have responded in prayer and worship, in faith and reverence, in whole commitment, in God-dedicated deed. In its presence they have felt their minds illumined and their consciences quickened.

I am not now thinking about the so-called mystical experience or vision, in which men are somehow drawn out of themselves and their environment in the contemplation of and union with the ultimate. To be sure, all high religions have had their great mystics. What I am talking about, however, is an aspect of the experience of ordinary men, who while looking up at the stars, for example, have been conscious of at least three different dimensions or aspects of this contemplative existence. First, they have been aware of a physical reality, that component of reality the scientists are especially conscious of...Second, with equal compulsion they have been aware of the aesthetic reality, the beauty of the stars, that realm of reality to which the poets and artists are sensitive...Last, but no less compelling to men down through the ages has been their awareness under the stellar sky of the reality of the realm of the holy, knowing that "the heavens declare the glory of God." That is why a Psalmist is more than a poet; he is con-

scious of and sensitive to a dimension of reality beyond that vouchsafed the poet—just as the poet sees a dimension of reality beyond that accessible to the scientist as scientist...

This then brings us to what seems to be the second usage of the term "holy," that referring to a holy people, a holy life, a holy faith. Much of the Bible and much of the literature of the church is quite clear about this. A holy people is a people sensitive and responsive to that transcendent reality we have spoken of as the holy. A holy man or woman is one who experientially knows reality in all its dimensions...There is nothing narrow and restricted about this kind of life. It is vast and many-sided. It is the liberated life, the life of the uninhibited soaring mind, the life not chained to the physical, or even to the aesthetic. The holy life is the life whose deepest motivations spring out of the demands of and response to that ineffable reality which becomes so dominating and transforming when one allows oneself to be invaded by it. The holy life is then a life above and beyond the good life, because though it certainly must have the dimension of goodness, it has also that dimension which gives it extension in the realm of the divine...

To summarize, high religion has always claimed that it is not, as some would say, primarily a matter of the emotions. Nor is it concerned primarily with ethics and morals, as others would have us believe. It asserts that life at its best must be all of that but also very, very much more; and the word that expresses this claim of *much more* is that strange word "holy."

Does what I have said make any sense? Is it true that there is a transcendent reality as real as that which the scientist deals with, or that which the poet sings about? Can anyone assert legitimately that the heavens declare the glory of God? When people pray do they actually communicate with a being beyond themselves? Most men sooner or later come to a realization, permanent or temporary, that there is a life richer and more meaningful than even the good life, namely the life lived in the conscious presence of God, the holy life. Is this too an illusion? I can think of no more important questions than these.

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God grant me—
The serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
The courage to change the things I can,
And the wisdom to know the difference.

*SONG OF LOVE TO THE LORD*

*I loved thee*
*When there was not a star in the sky*
*Nor a wave in the sea;*
*There was naught but I:*
*Thee and me.*

*Higher than the high heavens we soared,*
*The waves below us billowed and the winds roared;*
*And long before the paths we trod were known to men,*
*To our soul was known the Way -- even then:*
*There was naught but I:*
*Thee and me.*

*And though o'er earth-roads many times our steps*
*have come and gone,*
*There is naught but I -- One.*
*(Thee and me.)*

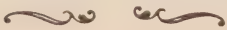
— Helen J. Barkus.

"Among all my patients in the second half of my life, there has not been one whose problem in the last resort was not that of finding a religious outlook on life. It is safe to say that everyone of them fell ill, because he had lost that which the living religions of every age have given their followers; and none of them has really been healed who did not regain his religious outlook."

— *Carl Jung, world-famous psychiatrist.*

*All that we are is the result of what we have thought.*

— Buddha.



*Book Review*

FRIEND OF LIFE, a Biography of Rufus M. Jones, by Elizabeth Gray Vining; Lippincott, 1958, 347 pp; $6.00.

A man's biography is important if if opens hidden springs to our own buried character and, in some measure, helps us to understand ourselves. FRIEND OF LIFE, a biography of Rufus Jones (1863-1948), the famous Quaker mystic, would seem to be such a book; its author, Elizabeth Gray Vining, was a friend of Rufus Jones and is a Quaker herself. One begins to read with a strong feeling of anticipation.

But one proceeds with a mounting sense of disappointment. Mrs. Vining assumes that her readers have a deep interest in the Quaker movement. Hence her narrative is full of details of Quaker activities, the exchange of correspondence, and descriptions of meetings, which narrows the scope of the book and places a strain on the reader's involvement in Jones' story. Further, one discovers that during his long life Rufus Jones wrote more than 50 full-length works, yet Mrs. Vining rarely makes more than passing reference to them, as if she considered his voluminous writings (on which his reputation was built) as secondary to his Quaker activities. She gives us endless details about his voyages, descriptions of scenery, domestic data about his friends, and so on—in the biography of a man who was primarily a philosopher and mystic, and one widely regarded as an authority on mysticism: "—the matters that meant the most to me of anything in the universe."

Any thoughtful reader would be interested to follow the course of Rufus Jones' development as a thinker, the evolution of his religious philosophy, his growth in spiritual insight. But Mrs. Vining is almost exclusively concerned with the external man. Only in one short chapter, *The Mysticism of Rufus Jones*, does she attempt to delineate the scope and substance of Jones' mystical thought. It is easily the best chapter in the book, but its excellence is only a comparative one.

A man of integrated character, purged and exalted by spiritual life, rarely says anything that is without value. Consequently the most interesting passages are those of Jones' own words, which Mrs. Vining liberally quotes. "Mysticism," he wrote, "is

the type of religion which puts the emphasis on immediate awareness of relation with God, on direct and intimate consciousness of the Divine presence. It is religion in its most acute, intense and living stage." "Mysticism may... stand for that type of experience in which a person feels *an overmastering conviction that actual contact is attained* with a divine, life-giving, joy-bringing Presence."

The following could be paraphrased to include all of religious living, in an era struggling with materialism: "I am not interested any more in just clinging to the Society of Friends and preserving it. We stand at a crisis and we can be bearers of the torch as our fathers were, or can carefully husband a little flame and keep it from going out a little longer." And this: "There is nothing more beautiful in this world than a soul all aglow with the fire of resolve to be *good* at all costs and hazards."

These are inspiring words. Unfortunately there were times when Jones revealed himself as a man diminished by our traditional Western viewpoints. In his meeting with Gandhi, for example, he assumed that the great Hindu leader's religion of love must have been strongly influenced by Christianity, as though such a universal religion were the property of any single faith. He was disappointed when Gandhi said "there was very little direct Christian influence...that his own faith in love as a way of life was born out of native sources rather than foreign." With some surprise he writes that Gandhi was "profoundly *Hindu*" and he remarks to his Hindu guide that the temple worship "seemed so low and poor...that it seemed too bad to encourage these types of religion."

There is also Jones' dismaying comment on St. Francis' experience of the stigmata, the most extraordinary of all his utterances, and one which indicated that Rufus Jones, great man though he was, had himself not attained the heights of spiritual realization: "The modern interpreter finds this event...a point of weakness rather than a point of strength. Instead of proving to be the marks of a saint, the stigmata are the marks of emotional and physical abnormality." To Jones' credit it should be said that some years later he spent one Christmas in Assisi and made a lonely pilgrimage to the place on the mountain where St. Francis had received the stigmata... "climbing through snow the last three miles of the way."

*Book Review*

MAN'S FIRST LOVE, by Ralph W. Sockman; Doubleday, 1958, 211 pp; $2.95.

There are many difficult and enigmatic passages in the Gospels, in which Christ asks the very highest of us. We all know these passages and because of the terrible implications in many of them, we usually overlook them. In any event they are there in all their uncompromising challenge, and we recognize that they represent the highest ideal we know of. We may not be able to reach that ideal yet, but at least we know what it is and we should not reduce it to the level of our own desires, and longings for an easy life. Inadvertently this is what MAN'S FIRST LOVE, by Ralph W. Sockman, would tend to have us do.

Dr. Sockman refers to many of these obscure or challenging passages and his interpretation in almost every case is, regrettably, one which will be most palatable to us. Typical phrases in his commentaries are: "We Western readers must make some allowance for oriental hyperbole... We must take account of the tense conditions under which Christ's first followers lived." We cite one example. When Christ told the young man who asked how he might inherit eternal life, 'One thing you lack; go and sell what you have and give to the poor, then come and follow me; Dr. Sockman's comment on this appalling passage is: "As I see it, Jesus was testing the young man's motive."

The other basic flaw in the book is the profusion of references to other writers, literally hundreds of them, to illustrate his points, much as an adroit conversationalist has at his command an anecdote or quotation for every occasion. This makes for an entertaining kind of book but when one puts it down it is the kind that one forgets easily. There is no feeling of substance after one has finished it: the writer himself is lost in the welter of his quotations.

A book to be important or remembered must give us the impress of a personality, the impact of a mind that knows itself and can speak for itself alone. Especially in the field of religious thought is this true. No two men's religious life, or spiritual experience, are the same; no man can tell us everything, or satisfy all of us. But what a genuine religious man can

tell us, of his insights and experiences in the life of the spirit, is something which, when delivered in an original manner and without undue support from other men's thoughts, all of us must prize highly indeed. Without doubt it is our most valuable reading fare and is the only kind, perhaps, that really causes us to change ourselves in any degree. It is no exaggeration to say that no one will be changed by MAN'S FIRST LOVE.

On the credit side must be mentioned the mellow, conversational style in which the book is written, which will have an undoubted appeal to many. In fact reading it, as has been suggested, is like listening to an expert conversationalist discoursing genially—perhaps too genially—about religion. Dr. Sockman does this with an assurance born of his long experience with the public. He has behind him a distinguished career of forty years as a Methodist minister in New York, and as a popular radio speaker for twenty-five. If anyone were apt to know what the public wants (or thinks it wants), it would be someone like Dr. Sockman.

He writes in his leisurely and informal manner, leaving most of our weaknesses undisturbed, addressing us on a level far below what each of us is really capable of, as if he believed his readers expected it of him. And perhaps we do. Perhaps neither he nor any minister is to blame, but we ourselves, for giving them a false impression of our real spiritual hungers. Perhaps we do not let them know that we can stand a stronger meat than the bland exhortations they serve us. We may compromise between our ideals and desires in other departments of life—often we have to; but in religion, at least, let us fix the ideal firmly in our minds and not debase it to the level of our hankerings for a comfortable life. (We should remind them that a desire for spiritual truth, for renunciation and struggle, is inherent in the soul of man; and religious people, especially, are keenly aware of this.)

We are not familiar with Dr. Sockman's other works. Perhaps they are more challenging than this book. Or if not, perhaps he could give us a stronger book if he chose to—if he felt that we really expected it from him. But first we should make our deepest spiritual needs known to those who write for us, and speak to us from our pulpits. Then only will we get the kind of books we seek in this field, and so seldom find.

## NOTICES and COMMENTS

*BOARD MEETING.* On January 21 the annual meeting of the Board of Fellowship in Prayer was held in New York. Of the many topics discussed, we mention two that should be of general interest to our readers. The Board voted unanimously to take vigorous steps to find a new office location to replace our present headquarters, in which our office staff will have more space to serve adequately the needs of an expanding operation. Our present funds are not enough to defray the additional expenses that this shift will involve, but through the grace of God and the help of friends we hope to meet this challenge successfully....The Board appointed Mr. Paul Hourihan Editor of the publication. Mr. Hourihan came to us last September, highly recommended from every standpoint we deemed essential, and he has more than lived up to our expectations. He has been working in close collaboration with the Executive Secretary, concentrating on editorial aspects of our publication. With Mr. Hourihan as Editor we confidently expect that FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER will take new steps forward and become ever more important in the spiritual lives of its readers.

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*MAIL RESPONSE.* We wish to acknowledge with gratitude the many heartening letters that spoke well of the December number. We would have liked to devote a page of this issue to some excerpts, but we simply had no space. Perhaps next time we can do so. The new Book Review section was well received, we were happy to note, and the special Meditation in the centerfold was particularly liked. Our thanks to all of you who wrote to us. We remind you that your letters are important in helping us to prepare future issues.

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*WORLD PRAYER DAY.* For spiritually-minded people every day is a day of prayer, but we call your attention to a special day on February 13, World Prayer Day. Perhaps on that day the prayers of millions of God-conscious people may help to alleviate the egoism and intolerance that men in their ignorance so often let themselves fall into.

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*LONDON CONTACT.* Recently we heard from the World Congress of Faiths in London and we recommend to our more philo-

sophically-minded readers a fine publication they sent us called FORUM. Their address is Younghusband House, 23 Norfolk Square, London, W.2. We quote from a letter we sent to them: "...The general purpose of both our organizations is an exciting symptom of a broad spiritual reawakening that may be going on in the world today. Certainly a generation or two ago publications like FORUM and FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER did not exist, for the good reason that people as a whole were not psychologically ready for them...In the midst of vast world-wide confusions, the rampant tide of materialism, and the loosening of traditional values everywhere, movements like those that we mutually represent are an auspicious omen that the darkness through which the world has been stumbling for forty years may be a prelude to the dawn of a new human unfoldment."

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*CONTRIBUTORS.* A word of thanks and appreciation is tendered all who helped in the preparation of this issue. Particularly we are grateful to Dr. Harold K. Schilling and Rev. G. Roy Bragg for their outstanding articles. Dr. Schilling is new to our pages but we hope to be able to print more of his work in the future. What impressed us most in his article on "That Strange Word: Holy" was its probing and thoughtful tone. In its approach it seemed representative of the attitudes of many seeking, troubled people in this modern era. Dr. Schilling, a professor of physics, is Dean of the Graduate School at Pennsylvania State College...Rev. Bragg, minister of the Metropolitan-Duane Methodist Church in New York, is an enthusiastic supporter of our work and we, in turn, are very happy to re-introduce him to our readers. He appeared in our June issue last year and this is only his second appearance in the magazine. We welcome him back and are pleased to report that our readers will have the benefit of his searching articles regularly in the future....Mr. Joseph E. Thompson, our Treasurer, originally sent us the lines appearing on the cover for this issue. They are a translation from the Sanskrit.

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*FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER* is published bimonthly at 35¢ a copy. The annual subscription rate is still $2.00. Special rates are available for additional copies...We note that the expiration date of many subscriptions falls due with this issue.

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## LIFE'S TAPESTRIES

Are we weaving threads of silver,
With a woof of tinseled dross,
That will tarnish in the making
And life's labor bring but loss?

Are the strands of gold well burnished
In the fires of faith and joy,
Till they shine with glow unclouded
By earth's falseness and alloy?

Words are but the threads we fashion,
Deeds the warp with which we build.
Will the tapestries when finished
Grace the walls we strive to gild?

*-- Anna M. Carroll.*

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